

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 5, 11, and 13 are cancelled.

Claims 1-4, 10, 21-28 are currently amended. No new matter is added.

Claim Objections

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objects to Claims 21, 23-25, and 27-28 due to various informalities. Applicants have amended Claims 21, 23-25, and 27-28 and respectfully submit that the Examiner's objections have been overcome. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's objections to Claims 21, 23-25, and 27-28 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects Claims 1-5, 7, 10-15, 20-23 and 26-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2003/0128191 to Strasser et al. (“Strasser”).

Claim 1 is in independent form and has been amended to recite a “user interface” comprising, in combination with other elements, “an interface formed from **a continuous flexible sheet of at least partially transparent material and disposed on the touch sensitive surface over the plurality of regions**, the interface configured to provide tactile feedback to the user by **flexibly deforming** when pressed by the user.”

Claim 10 is in independent form and has been amended to recite a “user interface” comprising, in combination with other elements, “an interface formed from **a continuous flexible sheet of at least partially transparent material** and disposed over and spaced away from the plurality of switches, the interface configured to provide tactile feedback to a user by **flexibly deforming** toward the plurality of switches when pressed.”

Strasser is directed to an input device including an “operable element” disposed above a switch (para. 0016). Strasser’s operable element 26 includes a frame having a transparent region 18 (see FIGS. 1-5 and accompanying description). For example, each of operable elements 26 shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 (reproduced below) are shaped as generally rectangular buttons having generally rectangular frames 20. Further, each of Strasser’s operable elements 26 appear as discrete and disconnected elements, each element defining a single pushbutton region.

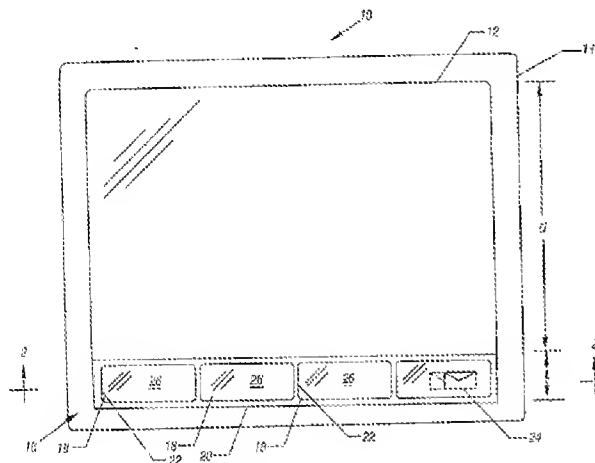


FIG. 1

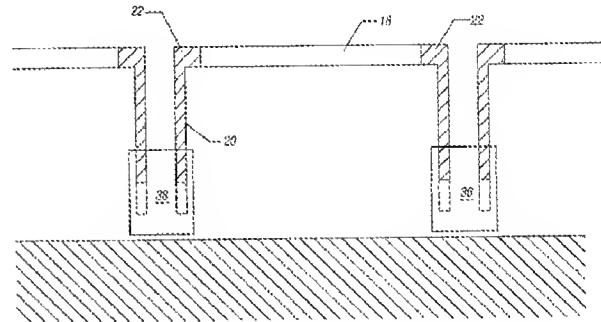


FIG. 2

Applicants respectfully submit that Strasser neither teaches a flexible interface nor does Strasser teach an interface that spans over more than one touch surface region.

More particularly, Strasser does not identically disclose a “user interface” comprising, among other elements, “an interface formed from a **continuous flexible sheet of at least partially transparent material and disposed on the touch sensitive surface over the plurality of regions**, the interface configured to provide tactile feedback to the user by **flexibly deforming** when pressed by the user” as recited in independent Claim 1 (as amended).

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome the Examiner’s rejection and respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Strasser. Dependent Claims 2-9 and 21-24, which depend from independent Claim 1, are also patentable. See 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 4. The

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-9 and 21-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Relative to independent Claim 10, Strasser does not identically disclose a “user interface” comprising, among other elements, “an interface formed from a **continuous flexible sheet of at least partially transparent material and disposed on the touch sensitive surface over the plurality of regions**, the interface configured to provide tactile feedback to the user by **flexibly deforming** when pressed by the user” as recited in Claim 10 (as amended). Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome the Examiner’s rejection and respectfully submit that Claim 10 is patentable over Strasser. The Claims which variously depend from independent Claim 10, are also patentable. See 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 4. The Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 10, 12, 14-16, and 25-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

On page 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects Claims 6, 8, 9, 16-19, 24 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable by Strasser in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,282,464 to Obradovich (“Obradovich”).

The “user interface system” recited in independent Claim 17 would not have been obvious in view of Strasser, alone or in any proper combination with Obradovich under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Strasser alone or in any proper combination with Obradovich does not disclose, teach or suggest a “user interface system” comprising, in combination with other elements, an **“interface including a plurality of contact regions, each contact region corresponding to a switch having a function.”** As explained above, Applicants respectfully submit that none of Strasser’s “operable elements” relate to multiple switches. Rather, Applicant’s respectfully submit that Strasser’s “operable elements” appear to be limited to a single button for a single switch.

Obradovich relates to a “technique for effectively providing audio information in a vehicle” (see title and abstract). Obradovich does not disclose, teach, or suggest an **“interface**

including a plurality of contact regions, each contact region corresponding to a switch having a function” and does not cure this deficiency of Strasser.

Because neither Strasser nor Obradovich disclose a “user interface system” comprising, in combination with other elements, an **“interface including a plurality of contact regions, each contact region corresponding to a switch having a function,”** to transform Strasser and Obradovich into a “user interface system” (as recited in Claim 17) would require still further modification, and such modification is not taught by the combination of Strasser and Obradovich. The “user interface system” recited in independent Claim 17, considered as a whole, would not have been obvious in view of Strasser and/or Obradovich. The rejection of Claim 17 over Strasser in view of Obradovich under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper. Therefore, Claim 17 is patentable over Strasser in view of Obradovich. Dependent Claims 18-20, which depend from independent Claim 17, are also patentable. See 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 4. Further, Obradovich does not cure the deficiencies noted above with respect to independent Claims 1 and 10 and Claims 6, 8, 9, 16 which variously depend from Claims 1 and 10 are patentable over Strasser and Obradovich. The Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 6, 8, 9, 16-19, 24 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by the credit card payment instructions in EFS-Web being incorrect or absent, resulting in a rejected or incorrect credit card transaction, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of

papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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